

Notes on Some Uncommon Calypterate Flies (Diptera) Observed during Recent Years

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The information presented here brings together notes on various miscellaneous species of flies belonging to the Families Tachinidae (chiefly Phasiinae), Muscidae and Anthomyiidae. Although my personal experience of the species dealt with provides the stimulus to their inclusion in this account, reference is also made to recent observations by other collectors on the same species.

TACHINIDAE

Graphogaster fasciata Macquart

I took a single female of this brightly marked little fly by sweeping along rides in mixed deciduous woodland at Dering Wood, Kent, 27.vi.1971. *G. fasciata* is widespread in Britain but rarely recorded. A male of the much larger Tachinid, *Servillia lurida* Fabricius was taken at the same spot; I have only otherwise seen this fly in Windsor Forest, Berks., where it is occasional.

Phania vittata Meigen

A rather striking, moderate-sized fly, shining black except for the bright orange abdomen bearing a black median stripe broadening posteriorly to include the long curved genital segments. *P. vittata* was added to the British list by Barfoot (1957) on a single male collected by him at Whippendell Wood, Herts. Despite the conspicuous appearance of the insect, no other records of the fly have appeared. In Europe it is recorded as a parasite of Pentatomid bugs.

During the "Crane Fly Recording Scheme" week at Rogate in July 1974, I was delighted to find a fine male of this fly sitting on bracken along a fairly open ride between deciduous woodland and a conifer plantation at Durford Heath, West Sussex, 24.vii.1974, on an overcast afternoon. The entire insect was figured by Barfoot (*op. cit.*) and a photograph of my specimen is being published currently by the British Entomological and Natural History Society in the account of their 1974 Annual Exhibition.

Subclytia rotundiventris Fallén

Another Tachinid with a black thorax and orange abdomen, like the last a parasite of Pentatomid bugs. I found a single female by sweeping among birch scrub on gravel workings at Brimpton Common, Berks., 14.ix.1969. Van Emden (1954) Esher Common, Surrey, as well as a second capture of an adult only recorded it from two localities in Hampshire and Andrewes (1966) added a record from Wiltshire. Allen (1967) fully discussed his rearing of the fly from the bug *Elasmostethus* at that locality and referred to a rearing from *Elasmucha* at Silwood Park, Berks. Allen commented on the deviation of his

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specimens from the descriptions of van Emden; my female also has central black tergal spots as well as marginal black markings.

Ocyptera interrupta Meigen

Also quite distinctive, slender bodied, shining black with red sides to the abdomen, this is probably another bug parasite although its hosts are apparently unknown. Like so many of the Phasiinae, it is probably more frequent than actual captures indicate but it appears to be scarce outside the south coastal counties. Van Emden (*op. cit.*) gave the distribution as Surrey, Sussex to Devon, Cambs., and Suffolk. Records from Kent and Berks. were added by Smith & Bates (1956), Isle of Wight by Andrewes (1956) and Wilts. by Andrewes (1966), Herts. by Edwards (1956). Uffen (1961) recorded it as being numerous in aspen scrub at Ham Street, Kent, 14.vi.1958.

I have found *O. interrupta* on two occasions only, first at Hazeley Heath, Hants., 18.viii.1968, when one was swept from open scrubby willow carr. Then, on Silchester Common, Hants., 20.viii.1972, another was swept from *Juncus* in open birch scrub. It appears to be particularly characteristic of fairly open scrub, which is presumably the habitat favoured by its hosts.

Cinochira atra Zetterstedt

My experience of this species has suggested that it is by no means as uncommon as has been supposed. Van Emden (*op. cit.*) gave the distribution "Hants. to Cornwall to Hereford to Notts.". I first took the fly indoors at Bromley, Kent on 18.viii.1966 but did not see it again until 29.viii.1971, when one was swept from low vegetation in birch woodland at Wisley Common, Surrey. On 4.vi.1972 it was obtained at the edge of woodland adjoining fen at Leckford, Hants. On 21.vi.1972 it was swept from low vegetation in woodland by Budworth Mere, Cheshire, to the north of the distribution area mentioned above. It was not, however, until 8.ix.1974 that I found the fly in numbers, when it was frequently seen in the net while sweeping mixed vegetation in woodland at Gracious Pond, Chobham Common, Surrey. Finally, several were seen again in Pett's Wood, Chislehurst on 22.ix.1974, this time in woodland of a drier nature than the other localities.

Although *C. atra* was placed in the Rhinophorinae (predominantly woodlouse parasites) by van Emden, it is known to be a parasite of Lygaeid bugs and is now usually placed in the Phasiinae. Although it is small (up to 3 mm.) and mainly black, *C. atra* is easily recognised in the net because it stands high on its legs and runs with a characteristic gait.

Mintho rufiventris lacera Rondani

A very elegant and distinctive species, with its laterally compressed abdomen bearing orange-red side patches and its orange femora, *Mintho* is widespread at least in south-east England but is rarely seen, although it curiously turns up in houses and gardens more often than elsewhere. Most records, as evidenced by the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) collection, are

indeed from the London area. Sussex, Oxford and Norwich are the known limits of its distribution in this country. Its occurrence in semi-domestic situations is probably because it is a parasite of moths of the genus *Pyralis*, of which the larvae develop in such places.

I have a female collected in his garden at Sittingbourne, Kent by Mr. J. C. Felton, 11.ix.1973, but although I had collected the species far from any human habitation in the Camargue area of France (Chandler, 1973b) I had not until recently seen the fly alive in Britain. On 14.vi.1974, two males appeared on a garden hedge at Bromley, Kent, within a few minutes of seeing the equally unlikely *Megamerina loxocerina* Fallén (Megamerinidae) in the same spot. An account of the latter is currently being published elsewhere. The *Mintho* were alighting and running about on the sunlit foliage of the Greater Bindweed (*Calystegia* sp.) growing over the hedge. I had never seen *M. rufiventris* in the Bromley area before but there is a specimen collected at Bromley by Mr. L. C. Bushby in the Maidstone Museum. The only other recent record of *Mintho* of which I am aware is from Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, 20.vi.1973 by Mr. D. G. Down, the specimen now being in the collection of Mr. R. M. Payne.

Elodia convexifrons Zetterstedt

Van Emden (*op. cit.*) recorded *E. convexifrons* only from four British localities in Hants., Berks., Surrey and Gloucs. Three Tineid hosts have, however, been recorded, all of them living in Polyporaceous fungi growing on dead wood. Knole Park, Kent, with its old beech woods rich in fungi, is an excellent locality for one of these moths, *Scardia boleti* F., which develops in the bracket fungus *Pseudotrametes gibbosa* Fr. The thick white brackets of this fungus are common on beech stumps in Knole Park and they frequently contain larvae of *S. boleti*. I have reared the moth on several occasions and I am indebted to Mr. Eric Bradford for kindly identifying it. From material collected on 12.ix.1971, four *E. convexifrons* were reared during x.1971, having pupated within the larval skins of the *S. boleti*. I had, however, previously reared odd examples of *E. convexifrons* from an unnamed Lepidopterous larva in the smaller bracket fungus *Bjerkandera adusta* (Willd. ex Fr.) Karst. collected x.1967, the fly emerging in iii.1968, also from Knole Park, and earlier still from *P. gibbosa* collected on Hosey Common, Westerham on 25.ix.1966, the fly emerging on 3.vi.1967.

Admontia (= *Trichopareia*) species

I have previously recorded (Chandler, 1966) the rearing of *A. maculisquama* Fallén (as *T. seria* Meigen, the name under which it is included by van Emden) from the larva of the Crane Fly *Tipula irrorata* Macquart. Since then, I have collected adults of this species from Burnham Beeches, Bucks., 1.vii.1967; Pamber Forest, Hants., 11.vii.1970; Durford Heath, Sussex,

25.vii.1974 and Inholm's Copse, Sussex, 26.vii.1974 (all by sweeping in woodland).

I have also reared a single example of *A. seria* Meigen (= *T. decorata* Zetterstedt of van Emden) from a larva of *Tipula flavolineata* Meigen, which was developing in a rotten birch stump at Ashstead Common, Surrey, 21.v.1972. The fly emerged on 23.vi.1972. Van Emden (*op. cit.*) quoted only two British localities, Epping Forest, Essex (reared from *Ctenophora binaiculata* L.) and the New Forest, Hants.

All of the British *Admontia* species probably develop exclusively in Tipulid larvae. Both *A. seria* and *A. maculisquama* were recorded as parasites only of *Ctenophora* and *Tanyptera* species, which have in common with the two *Tipula* species mentioned above that they develop in decaying wood, an uncommon larval development medium in the Tipulidae.

Otherwise in this genus, I have only found two specimens of *A. blanda* Fallén at Wisley Common, Surrey, 7.vii.1968 on low vegetation by a woodland stream.

Drino (= *Phorcida*) *lota* Meigen

Van Emden (*op. cit.*) said of this species that it was very rare, but quoted several localities from Hants., Kent, Surrey, Gloucs., Somerset, Hereford, Scotland and Ireland. The Surrey record was from Weybridge and the various recorded Lepidopterous hosts included the Elephant Hawk Moth (*Deilephila elpenor* L.).

During the British Entomological and Natural History Society field meeting held at Bookham Common, Surrey on 15.viii.1971, Mr. W. Parker collected a larva of the Elephant Hawk, from which to his great dismay, a Tachinid fly emerged on 29.x.1971. This fly, which he kindly passed on to me, proved to be a female of *D. lota*, which is an addition to the comprehensive list of the Diptera of Bookham Common compiled by Mr. L. Parmenter.

ANTHOMYIIDAE

Eustalomyia hilaris Zetterstedt

This fly, strikingly marked although very similar to the other three British species of the genus, was reinstated on the British list by Smith (1971) on specimens collected in his garden, where (Smith, 1974) it has apparently now disappeared. It is therefore of interest to note that I took a single male of the genus on a recently fallen beech trunk in Windsor Forest, Berks., on 3.viii.1974, which was subsequently found to belong to *E. hilaris*. One or two others were seen alighting on the trunk at the same time.

I have previously recorded my experience of the other three species (Chandler, 1973a). Since writing that account, I have obtained additional females of *E. festiva* from Harting Pond, Sussex, 28.viii.1972 and 27.vii.1974 (one on each occasion, the first sitting on a log by the pond); Knole Park, Kent, 8.x.1972, by bore holes on a beech log; Bix Bottom, Oxfordshire,

17.viii.1972, by bore holes on a standing ash trunk. Of *E. histrio*, I have caught two males which were at rest on beech trunks in diffuse sunlight at Bix Bottom, on 24.vi.1973, near to where the *E. festiva* was taken. The male of *E. festiva*, which is certainly the commonest species in my experience, has curiously eluded me.

MUSCIDAE

Phaonia apicalis Stein

I swept a female of this fly from shrubs by a small woodland pond at Longrope Wood, Orlestone Forest, Kent, 17.vii.1973, a spot where several other scarce Diptera were collected at the same time. Fonseca (1968) gave only one British record, based on a specimen collected by Mr. L. Parmenter in Blean Woods, Kent, 23.vii.1964, stated to be a male, but Mr. A. C. Pont has informed me that the fly was in fact a female. Since the publication of the Handbook, Mr. Fonseca has apparently collected *P. apicalis* at a small wood in East Kent, so it appears to be a Kentish speciality.

Piezura miki Strobl

This species is apparently much less frequent than its close relative *P. graminicola* Zetterstedt. Fonseca (*op. cit.*) recorded it only from two localities (in Kent and Berks.), while Andrewes (1969) added a record from Wilts. I swept one female from a ride in Wittenham Wood, Berks., 8.viii.1971.

Fannia metallipennis Zetterstedt

I have reared a male of this species from a squirrel's drey, from which the puparium was collected on 18.viii.1972 at Leckford, Hants. while it was being examined by coleopterists. The fly emerged in mid April. Fonseca (*op. cit.*) gave no rearing records for this species, which he recorded from twelve British localities.

Fannia gotlandica Ringdahl

This species appears rather local in southern England, north to Cambs. (nine localities mentioned by Fonseca) and is known to develop in rotten elm wood. I have only obtained females myself. The first was taken in the old beech woodlands at Knole Park, Kent, 12.x.1968, where Mr. A. Allen (1966) had previously collected it. Since then I swept one example from low vegetation in ash woodland at Wittenham Wood, Berks., 8.viii.1971, and another was beaten from box bushes in the Water Garden at Leckford, Hants., 4.vii.1971. Most recently, on 3.viii.1974, I found three females flying around and alighting on rotten beech stumps in Windsor Forest, Berks.

Acknowledgements

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Parker for enabling me to include mention of the captures made by them.

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AUTOGRAPHA GAMMA L. F. BIPARTITA ORSTADIUS AT WOKING. — On the morning of 23rd October, 1975 I was about to throw out a solitary Silver-Y from my trap when to my surprise I noticed that the "gamma" mark was broken. This is apparently a very rare variety of this common moth and there are only three examples of it in the Rothschild-Cockayne-Kettlewell collection in the Natural History Museum.—C. G. M. DE WORMS, Three Oaks, Horsell, Woking.

LARVAE OF ACHERONTIA ATROPOS L. AND HYLES GALLII ROTT. IN NORTHUMBERLAND. — A fully grown larva of the Death's-Head Hawkmoth *Acherontia atropos* L. was brought to this Museum on 8.ix.1975 from Cockle Park Experimental Station, Morpeth, Northumberland. It was found feeding on potato leaves by Mr. B. Mitchell.

A larva of the Bedstraw Hawkmoth *Hyles gallii* Rott. was found by Capt. H. V. Green at Fell Cottage, two miles north of Haydon Bridge, Northumberland, on 9.x.1975. It was feeding on Rose-bay Willow-herb and was about threequarters grown. It duly pupated after about a week. — ALBERT G. LONG, Deputy Curator, Hancock Museum, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.